



DIVE SHOP

New Orleans

Checkout Dive Information

Plans are subject to change. It is your responsibility to stay current.

Reserving Your Spot and Getting Ready

As Soon as Possible: Student divers must reserve their spot by paying the minimum deposit of \$100. The trip cost covers instructor fees, diving expenses and your internationally recognized lifetime Open Water Scuba Diver certification card. Certified divers go on a space available basis and pay a lesser amount.

Rental Equipment: You are responsible for trying on, reserving, picking up, paying for, transporting, keeping track of, cleaning and returning all equipment needed, including two tanks. Pick up your rental equipment at Harry's Dive Shop on Friday. We offer the complete weekend rental package, including fills, to our entry-level students for \$100 plus tax.

Checking Weight: It is also your responsibility, as a "soon to be certified" and responsible scuba diver, to get in the pool (bring a towel) with the rental wetsuit to find out how much additional lead your cold water wetsuit requires. You should be able to sit lightly on the shallow end bottom with an exhaled breath. You will need additional lead for salt water.

What We Will Be Doing

Plan on driving to DeFuniak Springs Friday afternoon or evening and returning to New Orleans Sunday afternoon.

- Weather permitting, the plan is to make two dives in the Gulf and two dives in fresh water at the inland springs. You are to be at the boat and/or springs at the times specified. Alcoholic beverages and illicit substances *are not* permitted over the weekend. We plan to dive with Panama City Dive Center (PCDC) on Saturday and Vortex Springs on Sunday.
- Panama City Beach is about six hours from New Orleans. The springs are about four hours from New Orleans.
- The boat is scheduled to return to the dock six hours after departure. You should be at PCDC for a pre-departure briefing and paper signing at least one hour before departure.
- Since we stay in DeFuniak Springs, we leave the lobby of the hotel at 8:00 am for the drive down to PCDC. We stop at K-Mart for any last minute needs or wants but really, we leave early so as to allow time for folks to find their way without getting lost or stressed. Missing the boat *is not* a good thing.
- Please tip the boat deckhands for a job well done. A decent tip is \$5/dive. Bear in mind that the more you require they do for you, the deeper into your wallet you should reach. A tip jar will be passed around so please have cash for tipping.

Required Equipment

Each diver must have:

- Mask, snorkel and adjustable fins
- Wetsuit boots
- Logbook with dive tables
- Dive knife
- Dive watch or dive computer
- Gloves
- Sufficient lead
- Whistle
- BC*
- Regulator with console*
- Alternate air source*
- Two *full* tanks each day*
- Cold water wetsuit*

**Denotes items available for rent from Harry's Dive Shop*

You may use only equipment that was purchased or rented from Harry's Dive Shop until you are a certified diver. When renting tanks* from Harry's Dive Shop, you may use *any* of Harry's tanks.

Suggested Accessories

Accessories suggested to make your trip more enjoyable are:

- Dive skin (wetsuit goes on easier)
- Wetsuit hood (depends on time of year)
- Gear bag (obvious)
- Two swimsuits (dry one for Sunday)
- Two towels (same reason)
- Motion sickness medication (just in case)
- Money (of course)
- Suntan lotion (not oil)
- Sunglasses (inexpensive)
- Mask de-fogger (so you can see)
- Hat (prevent sunburn)
- One-handed snacks (no alcohol)
- Drop cloth or tarp (sandy springs)

Required Skills

The skills you are expected to do on the certification trip include but are not limited to:

- Flooding, removing, replacing your mask
- Removing, locating, replacing and clearing your regulator
- Removing and replacing weight system
- Octopus ascent
- Emergency out-of-air ascent
- Neutral buoyancy
- Diver rescue
- Navigation.

■ When the boat returns to the dock, a truck may be there to pick up empty tanks. The tanks are taken to PCDC and filled while we eat dinner. You must pick up your tanks from PCDC or you will have nothing to use on Sunday. Harry's Dive Shop pays for *air* fills only for students getting certified for the first time. Other than that, each pays for his/her own air or Nitrox fills.

■ On Sunday morning, we leave the lobby of the hotel at 6:00 AM to go to the springs and set up for diving. The plan is to make two scuba dives and one snorkeling excursion. We hope to finish by noon.

■ We typically stop for lunch at exit 85, back to the same exit as the hotel, and eat at Beef O'Brady's, in front of Wal-Mart, before getting on the road to go home.



Why We Stay in DeFuniak Springs

The drive from New Orleans to DeFuniak Springs is all Interstate. We prefer the easier and shorter drive on Friday evening. We get up the next morning, have breakfast and complete the 1.5 hour trip to Panama City Beach along the two-lane, winding road. After diving and getting the tanks filled in Panama City, we usually go back to DeFuniak Springs to clean up and have dinner with new friends. (Sometimes we eat in Panama City.) On Sunday morning, we leave the hotel lobby at 6:30 AM and go to the springs as discussed on Saturday. Diving is to begin at 7:00 AM and should be done by noon.

When You Are Done

After completing the required dives, your logbook will need to be checked for accuracy and signed by one of our instructional staff. This can be done at the springs or at Harry's Dive Shop when returning rental equipment no later than Tuesday. At this time, you fill out the paperwork for your certification card including full name, address, e-mail and date of birth.

Places to Stay and Dive Site Addresses

Super 8

402 Hugh Adams Rd
DeFuniak Springs, FL
(850) 892-1333 (\$59.95)

Best Western

2343 Freeport Rd
DeFuniak Springs, FL
(850) 892-5111 (\$71.00)

Americas Best Value

(850) 892-3125

Panama City Dive Ctr

4823 Thomas Dr
Panama City Bch, FL
(850) 235-3390

Vortex Springs

1517 Vortex Spring Lane
Ponce de Leon, FL
(850) 836-4979

Morrison Spring

Morrison Springs Road
Caryville, FL
(850) 892-8108

Directions

All of the places we will be going are ones your vehicle's navigation system or GPS should have little difficulty finding. Nevertheless, in case you need to do it the old-fashioned way, here are turn-by-turn directions:

NOLA to DeFuniak Springs:

- Take I-10 east to Florida Exit 85 (270 miles; approximately four hours).
- The hotels are on US-331 — some left, some right.

DeFuniak Springs to PCDC

There are a couple of ways you can go, and your GPS may give you slightly different directions than what you see here. Nevertheless, these are the simplest directions with the fewest turns.

- South on to FL-83/US-331. Go 14.5 miles.
- Left on to FL-20 East. Go 15.3 miles.
- Turn right onto FL-79 South/Dog Track Rd. Continue on FL-79 S for 16.1 miles.
- Left on to Front Beach Rd. Go 6.7 miles.
- Slight right on to CR-392/Thomas Dr.

Panama City Dive Center is at the end of the straight part of the road. Do not turn left toward the state park and do not turn right onto the beach road. Be at the dive shop *at least* one hour before boat departure.

PCDC to DeFuniak Springs

These are just the reverse of the directions you used to get to PCDC.

- Left on to Z98/Thomas Dr.
- Continue west about eight miles.
- At the V veer right on FL-79 toward Bruce. Go about 16.1 miles.
- Left on FL-20 toward Ebro and Niceville. Go 15.3 miles.
- Turn right (Chevron and Shell on corner) on US-331 North.

From here it is approximately 15.3 miles to DeFuniak Springs.

DeFuniak to Vortex Spring

- I-10 east (Tallahassee). Go 11.2 miles.
- Take exit 96 and turn left on to FL-81 North (S-181A). Go 4.8 miles.

There is a large sign marking the entrance to Vortex Spring. The spring is actually a half mile back from this point on Vortex Spring Rd. Meet at the dive store.

DeFuniak to Morrison Springs

- I-10 east (Tallahassee). Go 11.2 miles.
- Take exit 96 and turn right on to FL-81 (S-181A). Go 3.9 miles.
- Left on to County Rd 181. Go 1.6 miles.
- Right on to Morrison Springs Rd. Go one half-mile to the main parking lot.